

## **PLANNING COMMISSION**

### **ACTION MINUTES**

**TUESDAY, APRIL 3, 2001**

Chair Parsons called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. at the Twin Pines Senior and Community Center.

#### **1. ROLL CALL:**

Present, Commissioners: Gibson, Petersen, Purcell, Parsons, Mathewson, Torre – arrived 7:05, Wiecha – arrived 7:10pm. Absent, Commissioners: None

Present, Staff: Community Development Director Ewing, Principal Planner de Melo, Senior Planner Livingstone, Contract Planner Haag, City Attorney Savaree, Recording Secretary Flores

CDD Ewing introduced Jonathan Stone our new Zoning Technician.

2. **AGENDA STUDY SESSION:** None
3. **AGENDA AMENDMENTS:** None
4. **COMMUNITY FORUM (Public Comments):**

Belmont Resident, Richard Vanderslice commented that the Planning Commissioners base their decisions on the Staff Reports and Vanderslice noticed that in every Staff Report for the 470 Ralston project, it was stated that the existing ARCO was 840 square feet. However, after the Planning Commission approved the Conditional Use permit, British Petroleum advised everyone that they made an error in the submission of the plans and that the actual square footage of the building was 1,340 square feet. He asked how the Commissioners could base their votes on Staff Reports that were grossly miscalculated. Vanderslice then summarized issues from the traffic report: Limited allocation, extended traffic backups, unacceptable operations, no perceptible changes in traffic flows, significant diversion to local streets, volumes are exceeding diversion through residential areas, and increased vehicle delays. He wondered: If the Commissioners were given all of this information to base their decision, how they could vote that this doesn't affect the streets, and how many other mistakes there are in the report?

6. **MOTION: By C Mathewson, second by C Torre, to close the Public Hearing.  
Passed 6-0.**
7. **CONSENT CALENDAR:**

**Resolution Denying a Tentative Parcel Map and Single Family Design Review Application to construct a new single family residence at 1601 Courtland Road consistent with action taken by the Planning Commission on March 7, 2001.**

**MOTION: By C Purcell, seconded by C Mathewson, to deny the Tentative Parcel Map for 1601 Courtland Road.**

Ayes: Gibson, Petersen, Purcell, Mathewson, Parsons, Torre

Absent: Wiecha

CDD Ewing stated for the record that the 10-day appeal process begins on the date the Planning Commission adopts the final resolution with the entire wording for the action.

## **8. STUDY SESSION:**

### **Landscape Plan for 1000 El Camino Real, Village Center**

SP Livingstone summarized the Staff Report for the final approval of the Landscape Plan, recommended approval, and informed the Commission that the applicant was present.

Chair Parsons noted the project did not include street trees and wanted to know the status of the street trees proposed for the area. PP de Melo replied that the Public Works Department had undertaken that project and had enlisted the services of Callander & Associates to come up with a comprehensive master plan for the installation of street trees along El Camino Real. This plan will link with the street trees that are adjacent to Togos/Safeway and continuing northbound up to Blockbusters. Chair Parsons inquired whether or not there was a set time frame for completion, considering that the project has been done for almost a year. PP de Melo stated the timetable for the preparation of Preliminary Plan is expected from the Public Works Department in 2-3 weeks. Staff will then review it and bring the Plan back to the Planning Commission for review of a preliminary format before going to City Council. It will be placed on a future Agenda in May.

CDD Ewing stated that the authority to approve the applicant's landscape plan rests with the Director but this is an opportunity for the Commission to provide any comments.

## **9. PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

**Continued Public Hearing- 780 El Camino Real: To consider a Conditional Use Permit, Grading Plan, and Design review to construct a 3,100 square foot retail commercial building on a triangularly-shaped 4,793 foot lot located at the corner of El Camino Real and Middle Road. The proposed building includes landscaping improvements and 11 on site parking spaces, which are accessed from a two-way driveway entrance on Middle Road. (App. No. 99-11220); APN: 044-22-018; Zoned: C-3 (Service Commercial); CEQA Status: Exempt; Applicant/Owner: Frank Papadopolous**

CP Jerry Haag summarized that Staff Report, recommended approval, and informed the Commission that the applicant/ owner was present.

C Torre asked staff about the lack of information regarding the change in grading and also noticed that there is less landscaping on El Camino Real in the current plans than there was previously. She wanted to know what the technical changes were. CP Haag said that the Staff Report states the total amount of landscaping has gone up a little, but that it has moved forward almost exactly to the property line from the side and rear of the building. Previously there was a 4-5 ft setback but that has mostly gone away in order to reduce the grading. There will be no trees on El Camino, but there are a few planter boxes.

C Mathewson discussed the parking issue and said that the parking requirements could reduce the ability to back onto Middle Road. He asked for any probability, comments, or ideas about that. CP Haag said that some larger vehicles may be hard to turn around in a relatively small space and drivers may prefer to back out.

Papadopolous gave a presentation.

C Torre said that she couldn't remember the previous design. She asked if there was anything above the level of the tower on the previous design.

C Wiecha questioned what the setback is from the gutter to the property line along this section of El Camino. Papadopolous answered about 11 feet or so. C Wiecha said that she is concerned with the renderings. She said that it looks to her that the building is set back further in the renderings than it is on the plans. She

asked if Papadopolous has been to CalTrans to receive an encroachment permit. Papadopolous said that he had. She confirmed that he was not sure yet that CalTrans would grant this project the required easements.

Chair Parsons asked if the columns on the side of the building were going to be plastered concrete. Chair Parsons followed up by asking if the windows and the doors were wood framed. Papadopolous said that at this point, they were not, but they could be. Chair Parsons asked if there were any problems putting street trees in front of this project to Papadopolous' knowledge. CP Haag said that it looked tight but if it had been done in other places, it could be done here.

C Purcell was concerned about street trees encroaching on people's ability to move through. She said that she likes street trees but that the sidewalk needs to be preserved.

C Torre said that the trees were blocking the view of the wall and their absence was a concern. She asked if there were any steps being taking to soften the wall.

#### Open Public Hearing

Doris Barbaragelata, 819 Holly Road, wanted to address the tree situation because she has been involved in the trees on the west side of Max's. She recalls some discussion that there would not be enough room for wheelchairs and strollers when the trees were put in. However, if anyone noticed, there were trees planted on three sides of the Safeway building, which limits the space to walk. In order to overcome this, they have made curves of concrete so that a wheelchair can pass each tree. She would appreciate it if the Commission would look at some of the sites where trees have been planted, specifically Safeway, prior to approving tree planting projects so that there is adequate room for wheelchairs and strollers.

Susan Dawson, 15 Antique Forest Lane, believes that the corner lot is inappropriate for any commercial building because of its affect on traffic. Across the street from this proposed building is a parking lot entrance. She opposes allowing cars to back out onto Middle Road. She said the unsightly parking and additional lighting will negatively affect residents above. She also stated that the walkway is too narrow, especially when cars are illegally parked along the sidewalk. She requested that the Italian Cypress trees be preserved. Finally, she requested that the Commission reject this project. She recommended that the City purchase this property for green space.

#### **MOTION: By C Wiecha, seconded by C Torre, to close the Public Hearing.**

Passed 7-0

C Wiecha shared her concern that the project is too big and will cause a higher volume of traffic. She is concerned about the parking area. She mentioned that it has been moved forward to reduce grading but now is causing an encroachment on the state highway. She does not feel that this is an appropriate mitigation. She wanted to see the project reduced in scale. In terms of the landscaping, she said that the street trees would be in the highway right-of-way. She would want to see street trees considered but it would have to happen off of the applicant's property. In terms of the proposed materials, she does not like the stone facing. She does not like the color scheme, especially the red slate.

C Torre stated that the trellis makes the building look squat and rectangular. She understands why the elevator tower has been reduced so that the line of the tower is in line with the trellis but thought that it looked better when it was higher. She thinks that it is a complicated intersection and knows that people cut across it. She does not like that people will be looking down on the parking lot, but there has been no design presented to show the lot in a different way.

C Mathewson's main concern is a safety issue dealing with cars backing out of the parking lot onto a central street and that there could be school traffic in the area. He would like to see some street trees if the Commission goes forward with this project. He sympathizes with Antique Forest Lane residents for having to look down on the parking lot.

C Purcell stated that it is an awkward site and sympathizes with the applicant for trying to develop the site. However, she believes that the Commission can not approve a project that may be a safety hazard.

C Gibson stated he does not see an incentive to backing out. It's a tight space and difficult to maneuver, but he does not see how backing out would be anything that a driver would want to try. He said that it does seem like there is not much parking but it will depend on the use of the building. He felt that it is big for the site and looks like it just barely fits on the lot. He believes that less grading is definitely an improvement but does not care for the tiles or the trellis.

C Petersen said that her concerns stemmed from the size of the building. She thinks that it causes a lot of other issues that deal with traffic safety. Her other concerns are the wall and the lack of street trees.

Chair Parsons mentioned that the building is too large for the configuration of the lot; he said that the parking situation is probably on the best possible location on the lot with respect to the intersections. It is furthest away from the intersections and it is opposite an intersection itself, which is a safety factor. He said that there would be much more grading and more of a safety issue if it were moved further down the street. He felt that the parking lot is where it has to be. He said that instead of having the building move forward, he had been hoping that the structure would be downsized and liked it further back from the street. He felt that the trellis could be used functionally with plants or vines growing on it and said he felt the trellis will cut down on what residents will look down on. Security lighting could be incorporated into the trellis and could be done so that people are not looking at lights glaring up. He thought that as far as the landscaping that there were too few decent sized shrubs and trees, especially against the wall. The tower is inappropriate and he does not like the color. It is going to be difficult to make the wall look decent and it would probably get sat on a lot. That could be a maintenance problem and he recommended something more substantial. He would like to see more wood incorporated into the windows, doorframes, and breaking up the wall to improve the appearance of the building.

C Purcell had a question about the use of the building at the specific location. She wondered what other uses the property could be used for. CDD Ewing said that other uses of the property are not on the agenda but that the topic was to decide whether this project met the Commission's approval.

Chair Parsons said that it appears that the Commission has concerns about the building and believed there were two options. One was to deny the project, and the second was to continue it. CDD Ewing said that the Commission did not have the option to continue it because staff and the applicant are near the permit-streamlining deadline. Chair Parsons said that the Commission can approve the project with the conditions or they can deny it. He asked staff if the Commission could approve it at a reduced size. CDD Ewing said they could. Chair Parsons said that this would include the Commission asking the applicant to come back so they could see what it would look like. CDD Ewing said there was concern about approving a smaller project than what is currently before the Commission.

**MOTION: By C Wiecha, seconded by C Petersen, to deny the project.**

C Wiecha said that she assumed that staff would like to bring back the appropriate findings, she would want to see changes in the size of the encroachment on the state highway. She agreed that since the project has two weeks until the deadline that the findings could be made verbally. C Torre said that she would prefer to leave out the encroachment issue because it is a risk issue to the developer. C Purcell asked if the Commission needed to separate out the findings for each of the permits being applied for. CCD Ewing said that if the project were denied, the vote would apply to each of the applications. However, the deadline date is April 17, which is the date of the next meeting, so the staff could bring back a new Resolution to be voted on then. C Wiecha said that her concerns with the Conditional Use Permit include the size of the property to accommodate the proposed project. In terms of Design Review, she has problems with the materials and colors. She is not completely against the trellis, as long as it is utilized. CCD Ewing said those are the big issues and the staff will add them to the findings.

Ayes: Torre, Petersen, Wiecha, Purcell, Mathewson, Parsons Noes: Gibson

**Public Hearing- Amendment to Zoning Ordinance: To consider an amendment to the Belmont Zoning Ordinance regarding the Auto Sales and similar uses in the C-3 zoning district. The amendment will consider requiring a Conditional Use Permit for such uses, which are presently allowed by right. CEQA Status: Exempt (CEQA Guidelines Section 15308); Applicant: City of Belmont.**

CDD Ewing presented the Staff Report.

In response to a question from C Gibson regarding outdoor used car sales, CDD Ewing answered that currently there are no controls or regulation to prevent the auto sales activities that are beginning to occur.

C Torre referred to the second page of the Staff Report and asked the staff if they had any concerns about a loss of revenue. CDD Ewing answered that any time there is an increase in regulatory review, there will be costs. C Torre rephrased her question of whether there needs to be a Conditional Use Permit for a case like this. She wondered if other cities required a Conditional Use Permit. CDD Ewing said he was not sure about other cities.

C Wiecha asked a question about the existing ordinance concerning Conditional Use Exemptions. CDD Ewing answered that the lists of permitted and conditionally permitted uses are established by Ordinance. The Commission and Council cannot exempt a single user except by amending the Ordinance for that use anywhere in the zone.

#### Open Public Hearing

Wilma Kartman, 508 Mountain View Avenue, thinks that it is a good idea to make this change. She thinks that it would probably be necessary in the C4 zoning districts as well. She gave an example regarding C4 from Old County Road.

Mary Rich, 323 Hiller, said that the zoning for her area has kept changing for the twenty years she has lived in her house. She said that every time it changes, they have to fight different projects that get approved. She said that work for these projects starts at 5:30am and said huge trucks are passing through the area up until 10pm. She asked the Commission to remember that the homeowners were there first when they changed the zoning. She said that none of the homeowners have asked for the changes. She said that she is simply tired of being woken up and bothered by the lights early in the morning.

Susan Dawson, 15 Antique Forest, brought up the topic of the Auto Broker on El Camino Real, which she said has been wedged into a little housing lot. She said that it has cars spilling out into the adjacent business building so there are cars for sale all around. She asked if this regulation would affect existing properties. Director Ewing said no, however, if the Auto Broker has cars on the street, then that is a violation and can be corrected.

**MOTION: By C Wiecha, seconded by C Purcell, to close the Public Hearing.**

Passed 7-0.

Chair Parsons said that the amendment is pretty clear and that Council supports it since they initiated the action. He sees no reason to make any changes to it.

**MOTION: By C Wiecha, seconded by C Torre, to recommend to the City Council regarding the Auto Sales and similar uses in the C3 zone.**

Ayes: Wiecha, Torre, Petersen, Gibson, Purcell, Mathewson, Parsons

#### Public Hearing- Parking

C Torre suggested the study session for 7C, 7D and 7E (the part dealing with parking) be discussed together with separate votes. CDD Ewing concurred.

**7C- To consider an amendment to the Belmont Zoning Ordinance regarding standards for residential parking. The amendment will consider increasing the number of required parking spaces from the current standard of two spaces in a garage. (Appl. No. 2001-0030); CEQA Status: Exempt (CEQA Guidelines Section 15301, Class 8); Applicant: City of Belmont.**

**7D- To consider an amendment to Ordinance No. 360, Section 8, the Parking Ordinance, to require the upgrade of one-car residential garage to two-car garages when one or more bedrooms are being added. (Appl. No. 00-1014); CEQA Status: Exempt; Applicant: City of Belmont.**

PP de Melo summarized Staff Report. He clarified the proposed definition of a bedroom, which was that a bedroom shall be defined as follows, "any room with a minimum of seventy square feet, includes a built in closet and a door that separates the room from the adjoining floor area within the dwelling unit." He admitted that the Commission has seen projects in which a large room has a large opening and no door. This revision addresses that situation.

CDD Ewing clarified that the Staff Report did not completely describe the cumulative effect of the proposed amendments. For example, given a larger home with a two car garage which proposes the addition of a bedroom (for a total of 4 or more bedrooms or add an additional 400 sq. ft) applicants will be required to provide two additional spaces.

PP de Melo stated that staff believes that the analysis of the proposed amendment achieves the objectives of the Zoning Plan and General Plan. If the Commission agrees with staff's assessment, staff will provide a resolution recommending City Council adoption of the modified language for Commission re-adoption at the April 17 hearing. This amendment came to the Commission for feedback, review and approval so that staff can bring a more formal resolution of recommendation to the Council.

**7E- To consider public, commission, and staff comments on the operation of the Single Family Design Review Ordinance and Grading Ordinance, and to provide direction for any amendments to be considered at a future public hearing.**

C Wiecha requested the definition of a two-car garage because she did not think that there currently was one in the Zoning Ordinance. She explained that she was asking because there is a wide variety of houses, anywhere from 50-75 year old houses that have what would reasonably be called a one-car garage, to others from the mid-50's through the 60's that have what would be called a substandard, two-car garage with 17 ft to 18 ft width, and finally to others that have a standard 20 ft by 20 ft width. She feels that the more common problem is getting the fully required width. She also wanted to consider what size would reasonably park two cars. CDD Ewing stated the two-car garage standard from the Zoning Code was 17ft wide and 18ft deep. He said that those dimensions were currently in the ordinance. He said that there are currently two standards. The standard for existing garages is 17 ft. by 18 ft., while the standard for new garages is 20 ft. by 20 ft.

C Petersen asked for clarification on what constitutes a bedroom and what the reasoning was for including the presence of a closet in the definition. PP de Melo explained that staff couldn't review every home after additions have been constructed and finalized to confirm the future use of rooms. PP de Melo further explained that including a closet provides a standard measurement for defining logical use of a room for sleeping purposes. He further explained staff needs to provide direction to architects and property owners as to what constitutes a bedroom. He said that the 70-sq. ft. quote includes the built-in closet.

C Torre asked if there was any way to prevent this amendment from adding another procedural step. PP de Melo answered that several provisions were brought up. He said that staff does not want to delay an applicant further but wants to get the applicant through the process as quickly as possible. C Torre brought up the idea that there is potential for variance applications. CDD Ewing said that it is the Commission's decision on whether to make an applicant add to their garage or to grant a variance. He said that the reasoning for requiring larger garages is to encourage more off-street parking.

C Torre discussed the subject of in-lieu fees for parking. CDD Ewing stated the Commission could recommend parking fees to the Council for consideration. C Torre spoke of the potential of using fees for a parking fund. CDD Ewing said that it is a Council decision to establish a fee to mitigate the loss of parking. C Torre asked if it was appropriate for the Commission to make a recommendation to the Council for it. CDD Ewing said that the Council would consider it if recommended.

CDD Ewing asked to return to the parking lot size issue. He said that if the Commission wishes to make a modification to the two standards, that the words "garage space" would need to be eliminated such that all

garages would be required to be 20 ft. by 20 ft. He said that this would reduce some of the overlap, however all existing garages would be held at this standard as well. He said that although he does not like having two different dimensions for what is arguably the same thing, it does give staff and the Commission more opportunity to give relief to the existing garages that may be undersized.

C Wiecha said that she likes the flexibility but her concern is that with two different sets of numbers, there are more opportunities at some point in the future for an inconsistent application in handling this issue. She thinks that a lot more projects would not be able to occur if there was a strict interpretation of the rule because of all the added work. CDD Ewing said that it should be as clear as possible, but maybe there are a few things staff and Commission could do to separate existing from new, including as simple as adding the word "new" any time the 20 ft. by 20 ft. dimensions are mentioned. C Wiecha said that she is not necessarily advocating that the Commission makes everyone build a 20-ft. by 20-ft. garage. She likes the definition of the 8-½ ft. by 18 ft. for a one-car garage because it does provide flexibility for homeowners without unduly impacting the parking situation on the City streets.

Chair Parsons asked if it was appropriate to continue discussion 7E since it has already been started and conclude the discussion 7C and 7D. CDD Ewing said that was acceptable.

Open Public Hearing for items 7C (standards for residential parking) and 7D (upgrade of residential garages).

Jerry Chapman, homeowner and builder in the City of Belmont, recommended the ordinance allow for legal non-conforming situations for existing garages in older homes and then state the requirement that to add a new or additional garages, the applicant must conform to the new standards. This would keep applicants from having to rebuild or reengineer their house for two more feet. In response to the 400-sq. ft. that would trigger this garage addition, he asked if that number was to include the new addition to the garage. He asked if he proposed a 400-sq. ft. remodel, if 200-sq. ft. of that was in the garage or if he had to ask for 600-sq. ft. of addition. He asked what the trigger point was. He said that in the San Mateo County, the definition of a bedroom includes any room that has a closet or is capable of having a closet. He spoke about the garage and parking issue and gave the option that instead of reducing grading and therefore shorten the driveways more towards the property line, he offered the idea that in lieu of the two additional spaces, the builder or owner provide off-street parking somewhere on that street, in an area that is most likely City right-of-way. It would be a tradeoff that would be more acceptable than in-lieu fees, an idea that he himself is opposed to. He would prefer to do the work and provide the spaces than to just put out money. Mr. Chapman also requested a change for item 7E to consider grading and off street parking separately because he thinks that the grading could be a sensitive matter.

**MOTION: By C Wiecha, seconded by C Purcell, to close Public Hearing.**  
Passed 7-0.

C Gibson said that the basic problem is that there are too many cars. He sees a problem in that just because the Commission requires an applicant to build a garage does not mean that the applicant will use it. He commented that requiring residents to use a garage for parking a car is unenforceable. He suggested that permits be required for overnight street parking starting at \$100.00 per year. This may encourage garage or driveway parking as well as provide revenue for street maintenance. He mentioned that most of the streets in Belmont are narrow and there is not enough space for cars to park on both sides.

C Torre said that she agreed with C Gibson's ideas and would be more in favor of charging for overnight parking than charging an in-lieu fee. She said that the problem in Belmont, especially in the areas with hills, is that the streets are narrow. The streets do not have a lot of parking either. It is these same homes, however, that would have the most problems meeting the new parking requirements. She said that the higher standards are largely going to be applied in the places where there is less of a need. She said that Variances are being granted for houses that cannot enlarge the garage for their modest sized house. She sees a problem in the Commission not doing anything to alleviate the parking issue. She would like to see additional parking created on the street rather than putting fees into a general fund. In cases where a variance is granted, she would like have some monetary amount attached but still provide some flexibility for homeowner. She said that she thinks that the Commission needs to consider that if they are going to increase the requirement to four spaces and then grant Variances with no compensation, then this may not be fair to the larger homes. She thought that the proposal to drop 7E was ok if the Commission was going to pass 7C and 7D.

C Purcell concurs with C Gibson and is concerned that by requiring residents to provide two garage spaces and two additional parking spaces that this may set a standard that would be undesirable in the future and applies it indiscriminately. She said that the time has come that the Commission discusses the issues of parking and coinciding traffic because it has been building up over the past twenty years. She said that these requirements would apply to the entire City regardless of neighborhood conditions and ignoring neighborhood character and individuality. She suggested making one side of the street red or "No Parking" and then let the homeowners adjust to their physical environment. She is against item 7D and feels that it is an odd priority. Instead she suggested the Commission does not set their decision "in stone." She thinks that it should have a sunset clause of 5 or 7 years mainly because she feels that currently, people are in a crisis mode. Her other suggestion is to not have the amendment apply to the entire City.

C Wiecha mentioned that an average Belmont lot is 6,000 sq. ft. and if the required parking becomes 800 sq. ft., then the Commission is asking homeowners to dedicate 14% of the property to parking. While discussing item 7C, she stated her concerns that residents who use their garage to houseboats and RVs will now have to pave more of their property in order to maintain the 800 sq. ft of parking. She felt that neighborhoods that pave over their front yards for parking are unattractive and she is not in favor of the provision that requires maintaining vehicle spaces for automobiles. She does not agree that the 400-sq. ft. dedicated to the driveway should have to stay clear of everything but cars and feels that this is restrictive of how homeowners use their property. She felt that this amendment could create a problem as to where homeowners can park their recreational vehicles, instead of solving a parking problem because these vehicles can't be parked in the front yard except for the driveway or the backyard because of the six-foot setback. CDD Ewing clarified that the word "vehicle" means automobile and reminded the Commission the existing provisions may also be amended to adjust to some of the concerns. Chair Parsons asked that the Public Hearing be re-opened.

**MOTION: By C Purcell, seconded by C Petersen, to re-open the Public Hearing.**

Council Member Dave Warden, 2414 Casa Bona Ave., spoke as President of the Cipriani Neighborhood Association. He believes the intent of the amendment in 7C was to consider that if someone is granted a 14 ft setback, perhaps it should be required, as suggested by Mr. Chapman, that there be a driveway or two parking spaces built somewhere else. He said that on his street, any car that does not go in the garage and cannot fit in the driveway goes on the street. Considering that the streets are too narrow, there is not enough space. Putting it in the Design Review Ordinance was one way it could be addressed. He agreed that the issue certainly needs consideration, either as an ordinance or as an addition to Design Review. He feels however that it is a separate policy issue when discussing only allowing parking on one side of the street or charging fees, both of which can be considered at a later date.

**MOTION: By C Wiecha, seconded by C Torre, to close the Public Hearing.**

Passed 7-0.

C Wiecha stated for the record, she is not in favor of parking boats or RVs out in plain view on the street, however there are no alternatives for parking, considering that storage spaces are filled to capacity within the area. She feels that this amendment takes away the flexibility previously mentioned and she feels that flexibility allows the Commission to look at projects with minimized grading. C Mathewson said he is torn by the four-car garage requirement. C Purcell commented people can't have everything with every home and therefore they need to make life style choices. If the Commission wants to make decisions to reduce street parking, then choices need to be made that eliminate street parking. Chair Parsons said that this is one method of improving the looks of the neighborhood. He commented that the Commission does have the variance capability, and that he could support this item. However, he needed clarification regarding the two additional spaces for all vehicles, not just automobiles. Chair Parsons asked for staff to research and come back to the Commission. C Torre stated she could support this if staff and the Commission could make a modification allowing RV and boat parking within the 18-ft. long driveway.

**MOTION: By C Purcell, seconded by C Petersen, to approve Item 7C, an Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance, to increase the parking standards for a Single Family Dwelling, with the amendment that it be re-examined in five years.**

Staff to return with additional language to finalize resolution at the April 17, 2001 Planning Commission Meeting.



Ayes: Purcell, Petersen, Mathewson, Parsons  
Noes: Gibson, Torre, Wiecha

Break: 9:30pm  
Resumed: 9:35pm

Discussion of item 7D (upgrade of residential garages)

C Purcell said that she thinks that this is something that needs to be revised in the General Plan. She quoted item 11, page 5 of the Staff Report. C Gibson says that he is uncomfortable in defining a bedroom and a closet. He feels that it is too intrusive into people's private lives. He does not think that this solution even directly addresses the problem. C Mathewson said that the definition is a way to count bedrooms or spaces that could be considered bedrooms.

C Torre asked for clarification of the amendment due to the Commission just passing the last item. She said that a 400-500 sq. ft. addition is not a big addition. She said that if the Commission is ever going to approve additions to homes in the hills, they are going to need some flexibility. She said that she could support this if there is a dropping of the wording "provided that no variance is required to comply with this provision." She thinks that a definition of the bedroom would be helpful but she is neutral to this specific definition.

C Wiecha agreed with C Purcell that a kitchen and family room expansion should trigger an addition to the garage. She said that she could understand a little more about the addition of the garage if a bedroom is being added. She thinks that 70-sq. ft. is a good cut-off point for deciding if a room is a bedroom. She would like to give applicants the flexibility to have a room with a door and not demand them to add to the garage. She discussed the flexibility on page 4 and she would like to see the option of providing the applicant the use of their driveway in lieu of the garage expansion, in lieu of item 7C. She believes that it is perfectly valid to park in the driveway and not demand a larger garage. Her concern was with what constitutes a hardship and would like to see hardship clarified.

Chair Parsons wanted to take out the "provided no variance is required." He would like to see a revision on the definition of a bedroom to include "any room with the capability of having a closet," otherwise just drop the reference to a closet altogether. He had a question of ventilation in these smaller 70 sq. ft. rooms. CDD Ewing said that 70-sq. ft. is simply the smallest it can be to be considered a habitable space. Chair Parsons thought that 70-sq. ft. may be a little small.

C Torre referenced Chair Parsons' comment that some homeowners have walk-in closets that are 70 sq. ft. She wondered if there could be problems of a walk-in closet being treated like a bedroom and did not think that the addition of a closet should lead to an addition in the garage. Chair Parsons said that it wasn't a big concern. C Torre asked if there should be a clause that says that the room is habitable. CDD Ewing said that this clause could get applicants to push the limits. C Torre said that it would be easy to check if a walk-in closet was being used as a bedroom. CDD Ewing said that there is an administrative cost to carrying out C Torre's idea.

**MOTION: By C Mathewson, seconded by C Petersen, to recommend to the City Council an amendment regarding the Zoning Ordinance, section 8.1.4, regarding off-street parking to cover item 1-4 in the Staff Report and the resolution in 4A about the build-in closet and of a definition of a bedroom to be 70 sq. ft. and to have a door which separates the room from the adjacent space.**

C Purcell said that she thinks that this is the same as issue already voted on. PP de Melo said that this motion was to add additional language to 7C, which clarified the requirement for four spaces.

Ayes: Purcell, Petersen, Mathewson

Noes: Torre, Wiecha, Gibson, Parsons

**MOTION: By C Torre, to amendment Section 8.1.4 of the Zoning Ordinance concerning off-street parking to read as follows, item 1 "when one or more bedrooms are being added to such dwelling**

**units," item 3 "400 sq. ft. being added to the existing home," and item 4 "for purposes of clarification, a bedroom shall be defined as follows, any room with at least 70 sq. ft., which includes a built in closet and a separating door."**

Failed for lack of a second.

**MOTION: By Chair Parsons, seconded by C Purcell, directing staff to look at the definition of a bedroom, and look at the impact of items 2 and 3, with respect to not penalizing someone if they are not adding on a bedroom or if they are reducing the number of bedrooms. The motion is to clarify and tighten up the language.**

Ayes: Torre, Petersen, Wiecha, Gibson, Purcell, Mathewson, Parsons

CDD Ewing said that there is only so much the staff can do to find a better definition but they need some input on what the Commission is looking for. However, staff will get in contact with other cities to see what their definitions are. He asked for more help in what the Commission wanted staff to investigate. He said he was willing to bring back more information to help the Commission understand what they were supposed to be voting on. CDD Ewing asked for an opinion on a three-bedroom house having one garage space and one driveway space. He was told that was a problem. He was trying to find the point at which the Commission believes that more parking needs to be added.

**MOTION: By C Purcell, seconded by C Torre, to reconsider and continue 7C.**

Withdrawn.

**MOTION: By C Mathewson, seconded by C Torre, to recommend to the City Council an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance regarding section 8.1.4, off-street parking, with the wording of item 1 as recommended by staff and items 4 and 4A in the Staff Report with the revision of a bedroom being a minimum of 70 sq. ft. and having a separating door.**

Ayes: Torre, Purcell, Mathewson, Parsons

Noes: Petersen, Wiecha, Gibson

Chair Parsons asked for the reasoning behind the no votes. C Wiecha said that her concern is for the driveway and the definition of a two-car garage.

**MOTION: By C Wiecha, seconded by C Purcell, asking staff to clarify a two-car garage definition especially in existing buildings where there may be some non-conformance, with staff's recommendation that the 17 ft. by 18 ft. for two car parking spaces be considered and to allow a provision to allow use of the driveway for parking in lieu of the garage addition.**

Ayes: Torre, Petersen, Wiecha, Gibson, Purcell, Parsons

Noes: Mathewson

PP de Melo clarified that 8.1.4 will include the language of item 7C in terms of the 4-car parking requirement.

Discussion of 7E (operation of Single Family Design Review and Grading)

Chair Parsons said that this evening the Commission has discussed the parking part of the issue but not the Grading aspect. He said that they will be reducing the threshold and adding the criterion that there does not have to be a change to the ordinance. PP de Melo said that staff recommended that that item be deleted in light of the other issues being discussed because he believes that the requirement for additional parking is strengthened by the items just passed. Chair Parsons said that if the Council decides not to make the changes that the Commission previously discussed, then there might be something to gain from having item

G. He would not want to drop it quite yet. PP de Melo said that he believes this to be a very general finding and the other recommendations just passed are specific. PP de Melo recommended that the Commission forward the recommended Grading Ordinance Amendments as outlined in the staff report to the Council for approval. The Commission agreed with Staffs' assessment to not include the additional Single Family Design Review finding as part of the review of the ordinance.

Open Public Hearing

**MOTION: By C Mathewson, seconded by C Wiecha, to close the Public Hearing.**

Passed 7-0.

C Wiecha believed the Grading Ordinance Amendments were a good idea and noted for the record, the addition of grading or vegetation removal in excess of 6,000 square ft. is also going to be of benefit and the clarification on tree protection. C Wiecha believed 500 cubic yards is far too large a volume for most properties and supports the revision.

**MOTION: By C Purcell, seconded by C Wiecha, to move Agenda Item 7E to Amend Section 9.23 (Grading Ordinance) of the Belmont Municipal Code to reduce the threshold of Planning Commission review of a Grading Plan from 500 to 250 cubic yards.**

Ayes: Petersen, Torre, Gibson, Purcell, Wiecha, Mathewson, Parsons

**Public Hearing- To consider public, Commission, and staff comments on the Single-Family Floor Area Standards, and direction for any amendments to be considered at a future public hearing. (Appl. No. 2001-0026); CEQA Status: Exempt; Applicant: City of Belmont.**

PP de Melo summarized the Staff Report, read the current definition of Floor Area and recommended that the Commission recommend this to the Council.

C Torre said that she thought the City Council had already adopted something very similar. CDD Ewing responded that the 7-ft. vertical height constitutes habitable living space and clarifies it. C Torre said she noticed something contradictory on item 1 about a carport being open. C Purcell said that carports should be taken out because they are not enclosed structures.

Open Public Hearing

**MOTION: By C Purcell, seconded by C Torre, to close the Public Hearing.**

Passed 7-0.

**MOTION: By C Purcell, seconded by C Wiecha, to recommend to the City Council that changes be made to the Floor Area Ratio Standards.**

CDD Ewing agreed to make the changes and will bring back the Resolution at a future meeting.

Ayes: Gibson, Wiecha, Purcell, Torre, Petersen, Parsons

Noes: Mathewson

C Mathewson said that he voted no because he wants carports to be enclosed.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

C Torre said that she is currently a delegate to the Block 4 Task Force and she wondered if anyone else on the Commission was willing to volunteer and take over this position for her. C Mathewson volunteered. She asked what the date was for the Joint Council Meeting. CDD Ewing told her that it would be one hour before the regular Planning Commission Meeting on May 15 at 6pm. C Torre then asked if she had the support of her fellow Commissioners on the concept of requesting staff to come back with the recommendation of in lieu fees. Because she received some support, CDD Ewing said that it would be added to an agenda although he said that there was not a lot that staff could do for the Commission on this item because it is conceptual. Its effect would require considerable commitment of staff's resources and the Council would decide the matter. C Torre brought up the idea of having the Commission meet an hour earlier at times to discuss general ideas but not the specific cases. She said that they could discuss in a study session the issues that they face frequently such as new houses on steep lots, General Plan, and subdivisions. CDD Ewing said that in terms of time commitment, that was for the Commission to decide. Chair Parsons said that he had no objections but recommended a lighter agenda so as to not start at 6pm and end at 12am. Other added issues included setbacks, getting people through the process sooner, and neighborhood outreach. CDD Ewing recommended the Commission think of possible issues they want discussed, which they can decide later.

C Purcell spoke about the Housing Leadership Council, which is working on affordable housing on the Peninsula. There will be Housing Leadership Tours on April 27 and 28 from 10am to 2pm. Reservations are needed and the deadline is April 20. The number to call is 325-5780. Also, there are a Design Workshops for the Pedestrian Bridge on 101 on April 18 and May 30. She recommended the Commission to go for more information.

C Petersen thanked a Council Member and the citizens that came forward to state their opinions.

#### **REPORTS, STUDIES, UPDATES AND COMMENTS:**

#### **ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting adjourned at 10:50 p.m. to a regular meeting on Tuesday, April 17, 2001, at Twin Pines Senior and Community Center.

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Craig A. Ewing, AICP  
Planning Commission Secretary

*Audiotapes of Planning Commission Meetings are available for review*

*in the Community Development Department.*

*Please call (650) 595-7416 to schedule an appointment.*